

At Last A Man Has Come To Philadelphia's City Hall.



David J. Smyth

Mayor Weaver Defies Ring for Many Years All-Powerful.

Prayers of Clergymen in His Behalf Find an Answer.

Attempted Gas Steal Is a Crisis in Quaker City's Life.

WITH heads reverently bowed, three hundred clergymen of Philadelphia almost lost in the great famous old church of the Holy Trinity, prayed to God that the mayor of their city be guided aright in the path he must tread. Even as their muttered prayers rose and were seemingly lost in the gloom of the lofty arches of the church a grim plot was hatching under the careful hands of one of the most unscrupulous "rings" that has ever disgraced the government of an American city, a plot which, if consummated, would steal from Philadelphia millions of dollars, putting the money into the pockets of the grafters instead of paying it out for the benefit of the vast poor of the city. One man alone was to have the power to frustrate this design, the mayor. Little did those faithful men know what was to be the fruit of their prayers.

That was more than two months ago. Today Mayor Weaver has proved himself a true man. He has defied the "ring," has cast out of office some of the chosen, and is rallying to the standard of honest government that great undercurrent of good citizens which has permitted itself to be trampled under foot for years and has allowed Philadelphia to be dubbed the "wickedest city in America." To the same standard they are flocking the malcontents, such as Dave Martin and Sandy Crow, who have been ousted from the "organization," and now seek revenge. They are trooping to the mayor's banner, these political outcasts, and are ranging themselves side by side with the real reformers. The mayor is no fool and recognizes that these men are as good fighters as the best, and as such he will use them.

The City Council's Shame.

Gas is to be the cause of the downfall of the all-powerful "ring," just plain, ordinary, everyday illuminating gas. What a power it has turned out to be, to be sure. Just because the "ring" determined to steal Philadelphia's great gas plant, paying for it a paltry \$25,000,000, fate has doubled on the grafters and they are about to lose all that they had.

On May 19, ignoring the fervent pleas of representative citizens, flaunting defiance in the face of a mad crowd of constituents, who crowded the galleries, hissing and hurling cries of derision at the men who were there to protect their interests; guarded by detectives and policemen in plain clothes from bodily harm, many of them craven-hearted and scared, yet cringing in obedience to the organization leader, the members of the city council sacrificed the most valuable franchise of the city—the lease of the gas works.

It was the most flagrant betrayal of public trust in the history of municipal government.

For seventy-five years to come these men, who are bound by their oaths to legislate in the interest of good government, handed over to the United Gas Improvement Company a property which, by the expiration of the lease, estimated from present earnings, will be worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

And for what? Twenty-five million dollars.

A Few Honest Members.

A few honest members of the council raised their voices in protest, but their pleas, like those of the citizens who for hours begged for delay, were swept aside in an avalanche of ayes from the puppets of the organization. For two hours two members of the common branch urged, pleaded, and begged their fellow-members to consider the enormity of the sacrifice. The sound of their voices had hardly died away before seventy-four other voices were raised, assenting to the cleverly laid scheme of robbery—planned, fostered, and consummated by a trio of political leaders.

The council chambers in the city hall presented a scene such as never before in the city's history. When the

finance committee gathered to give public hearing to the propositions before that body, the big meeting room was packed until a foot space was a luxury. Nearly a thousand earnest, determined business men were there to voice their disapproval of the plan to lease the gas works under the terms proposed. In the corridor outside several hundred more were assembled, who, unable to hear what was said, hissed and cheered, according to the sounds that reached them from the room.

Weaver Lifts the Gauntlet.

The gauntlet had been thrown down by the grafters in dead earnest. Was there a man who dared lift it? Every one looked to the mayor. A hundred Methodist ministers marched to the city hall to protest against the steal. To them Mayor Weaver said: "Within twenty-four hours after the passage of that bill by the council I made up my mind what I would do, and I shall carry out my purpose to the end. If I can help it the gas lease, as proposed, shall never be foisted on the city of Philadelphia. As to the methods that I have myself worked out to prevent this, that is something that will develop within the next few days. But I say to you, as I said before, that I will use the utmost of my power to prevent what I believe is the greatest iniquity being put upon the city of Philadelphia."

"The present lease is infinitely better than the other two, and why should I be asked to consent to the city giving away a contract that we now have by which we must receive in annual revenues at least \$25,000,000 in the next twenty-four years, and with the increase in the consumption of gas probably \$30,000,000, and then at the end of twenty-two years we would get back without any charge against it a great gas plant, with all its franchises and with all the money expended upon it by the United Gas Improvement Company? The plant, I believe, would be worth to the city from \$30,000,000 to \$100,000,000, so that the lease would be practically giving away without any return the present gas plant, which would be worth \$25,000,000 to \$30,000,000, for twenty-two years from \$30,000,000 to \$100,000,000."

The Sudden Blow.

When it was said that the mayor would veto the bill the organization laughed in its sleeve and swore that it would pass the bill over his head. The mayor knew this, and he determined not to wait for the defeat. He carried the war into the enemy's country, and, to the astonishment of friend and foe alike, he summarily dismissed David J. Smyth, the director of public safety, and Peter E. Costello, the director of public works, two creatures of the ring and men of power. What is more, he has threatened an assault upon the whole rotten officialdom of the city.

How much consternation this action has wrought in the ranks of the ring can only be imagined, for the ring naturally puts up a strong bluff—it has the habit—and says that it will fight to the last ditch and will put the gas deal through in spite of everything.

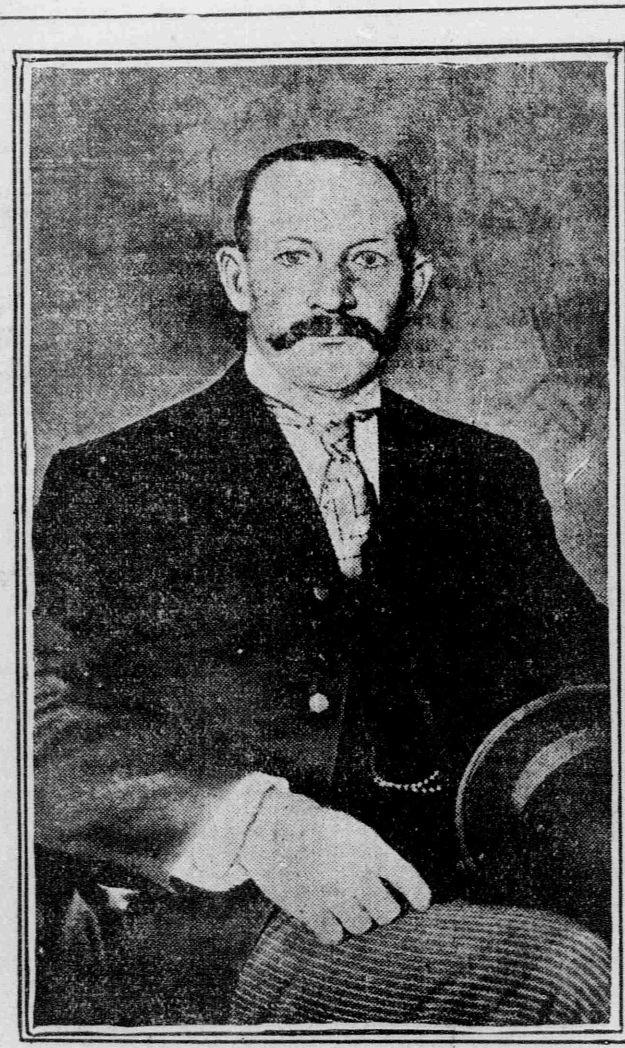
What will be the outcome of the fight? Will it be far-reaching enough to strike a death blow at the immense amount of graft which has been going on in Philadelphia for decades? Who knows? Even if it is not so far-reaching, Rome was not built in a day, and this fight may prove the entering wedge to finally split the rotten log.

In the place of the dismissed officers, Mayor Weaver has appointed A. Lincoln Acker, director of public works, and Col. Sheldon Potter to be director of public safety.

History of Gas Deal.

A short history of the gas deal, or steal, shows perhaps the corruption of the Quaker City better than many sermons could do.

Philadelphia owns its own gas works, which are leased to an operating company. The city is deriving a handsome annual revenue, based on a percentage of the gross receipts, a revenue which for the past year amounted to about \$700,000 and which, under the terms of the lease, with the natural increase of



Israel W. Durham



Mayor Weaver.



Peter E. Costello

Militant Course Adopted Toward Gang of Grafters.

Traditions of Years Upset by Sudden Blow He Lands.

Story of Organization Which Gave Durham One-Man Power.

Martin men and Warwick was nominated amid a salvo of inspired cheers. Ere the echo of the shout died away the organization was conceived in the brain of Israel W. Durham.

In another hall and convention held that same day "Judge" Durham declined a renomination to the office of magistrate, and thereafter he was interested in nothing but his personally conducted war on Martin.

Crow Pledges Support.

In the light of subsequent events, and anticipating the future a bit, it is worth while to recall an incident of that convention of Musical Fund hall. The Tenth ward had just voted, and Durham knew that he had lost the fight, when "Sandy" Crow, the battling boy from the Fifteenth ward, pushed his way across the smoke-darkened hall and, leaning over Durham's shoulder, he whispered:

"I'll vote my delegation for Penrose if you say so."

"Don't be an ass, Warwick is from your ward. Vote your men for him."

"But I want to serve you—to stand by you—to go down with you in embryo. You won't make a fool of yourself for me and sell out your people for me either. You vote for Warwick. 'Fifteenth ward' called the secretary of the convention."

There was a moment of silence.

"Fifteenth ward," repeated the clerk.

With one hand on Durham's shoulder and the other high above his head, Crow cried out: "Fifteenth ward votes for Charles F. Warwick," and then gave the number of votes to be recorded.

The two men shook hands.

Crow at Durham's Throat.

Only nine years later Durham burned the hot iron of ingratitude into the very soul of Alexander Crow, Jr., and today Crow is at his throat calling for the vengeance that is his of right.

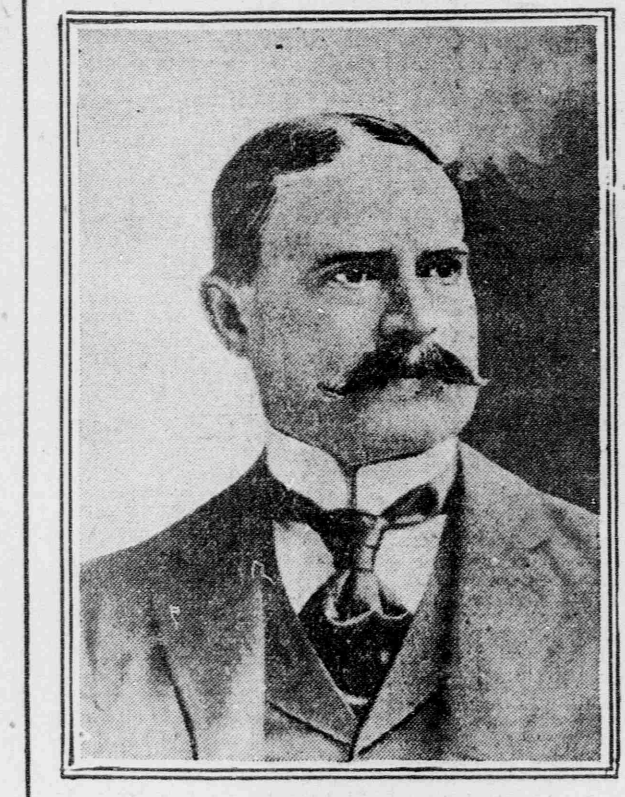
The convention that nominated Warwick had scarcely adjourned, when Durham, Penrose, Charles Seger, and a dozen other factors in the embryo organization met and framed up a scheme with Thomas J. Ryan, who controlled the Democratic organization at the time, whereby the late Robert E. Pattison was to be nominated for mayor with the understanding that he would appoint "Sandy" Crow to the office of director of public safety. Durham, Penrose, and Crow planned to bring about the defeat of Warwick at the polls. It was proposed that they should use the police and firemen to drive Martin out of politics. Quay soon learned of this plot and forced Warwick to seek out Durham and pledge fair treatment to all factions. An ironclad agreement was entered into and the deal looking to the election of Pattison was called off.

Soon after Warwick was elected, Samuel Peltz and C. Wesley Thomas had a battle royal over appointments in the Twenty-fourth ward. Thomas, like Crow, was for Durham first, last and all the time, and was one of the now famous seven. It was finally agreed that both, Peltz and Thomas should share the patronage equally. The first appointment went to the bureau of police, and under the agreement the appointment belonged to Thomas. A second appointment went to the bureau of fire, and Thomas called upon Mayor Warwick to register his complaint. He recalled the anti-election pledge made by Warwick, and thus called forth Warwick's most famous utterance:

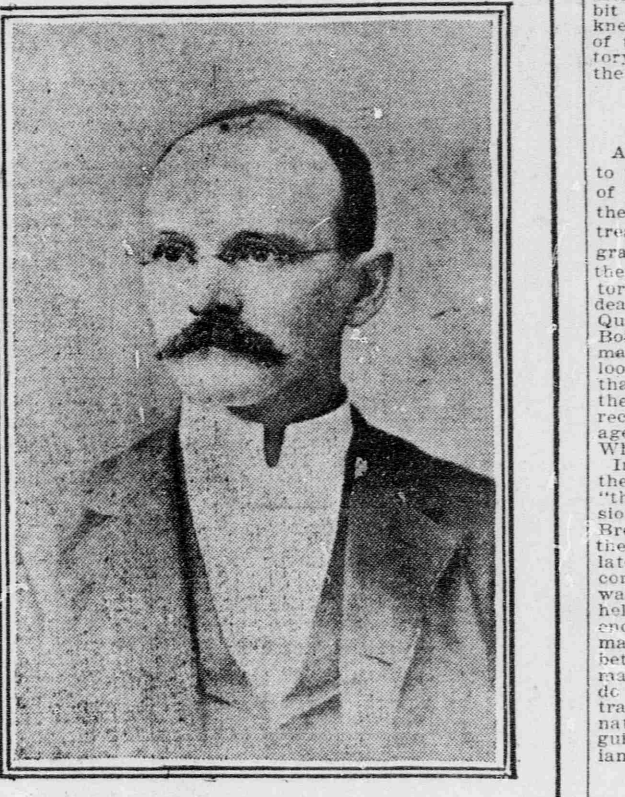
"Things are different now."

This speech of four words by Mayor Warwick was notice to Durham that he had been betrayed again, and he then realized for the first time that he had to fight Martin and beat him at the polls or quit. He decided to quit.

The great battle, or rather the personal struggle of Quay against the State machine, followed and Quay won the chairmanship of the Republican State committee over B. Frank Gilkeson. This contest served to bring out the fact that David Martin, as leader, had managed to eliminate all of the ward leaders as controlling factors in what had come to be known as "The Horse Combine," and served to mark the very beginning of the one-man power that ruled Philadelphia until Mayor Weaver entered to hear the voice of the people.



Alexander Crow Jr.



Thomas L. Hicks

population and of gas consumption, would net a largely increasing sum yearly, from now on until the expiration in twenty-three years, and with its thing more than a score of years. The terms of the present lease are such that the private consumers of gas in the city would have had the benefit of a gradual and regular reduction of the price of gas, and at the expiration of the leasehold the United Gas Improvement Company was bound to return the plant to the municipality, free of charge, together with all improvements and extensions made during that period.

The present lease, with all its advantages, with an aggregate value at the expiration of seventy-five years which has been conservatively estimated at something like \$150,000,000, with its privilege of reversing to municipal ownership in twenty-three years, and with its compulsory reduction of the cost of gas to the people—the partisan bosses of Philadelphia have resolved to forfeit. They have further undertaken to sell out the entire concern, right and title, for a period of twenty-five years, to the United Gas Improvement Company for the lump sum of \$25,000,000, to be paid to the city in stipulated installments covering a period of two and a half years after the ratification of the bargain.

Durham Prime Mover.

This deal was made nearly two months ago in the private offices of Israel W. Durham, the other party to the agreement being Thomas Dolan, head of the United Gas Improvement Company. Stripped to the bone, the proposition meant that to raise ready money to the amount of \$25,000,000, with all the attendant prospect of contracts, pickings, and mercenary advantages for the unscrupulous specimen of the present generation, these gentry were content to mortgage the future of Philadelphia by robbing it of one of its most certain and lucrative sources of revenue

for one-fifth or less of the real value of the concession.

When the iniquity of the transaction became public, when the members of the council brazenly voted as they were forbidden, then it was that some of the people of Philadelphia started a movement to defeat the corruption. The gas operators and the political machine appeared to have gone a step too far. Some of the Philadelphia's threatened a show of physical resistance. The magnitude of the law and order society to talk of violence. Secretary Gobbony voted the sentiment of many citizens when he said: "There are not ten councilmen who do not deserve hanging, and there are plenty of lamp posts about Philadelphia."

The attitude of the gang is shown by the Vanderbiltian remark of Contractor James McNichol, one of the bosses: "Protests be damned." Mayor Weaver, alarmed by the public agitation and indignation, sent a message to the council advocating that the city take back the gas works from the company and throw the lease open to public competition. The result is known to the readers of the newspapers. The ring forced the seventy-five-year lease through the council amid the shouts of "thieves," "plunderers," and "grafters" from the assembled citizens, who swung ropes from the galleries, threatening to lynch the ring councilmen. Fortunately they were restrained by a big squad of police, who appeared on the scene, and with drawn revolvers forced the people to submit while the representatives of the ring enacted the ordinance. It now awaits the signature of Mayor Weaver. He says that he will veto it; the ringsters smile, say that he is scared, and promise to pass it over his veto.

Terms of Gas Lease.

The terms of the Philadelphia gas lease are these:

The United Gas Improvement Company holds a thirty-years lease on the Philadelphia gas works, which the city

can take up in 1907 by paying \$20,000,000. Claiming that the city needs \$45,000,000 to meet expenses, with a borrowing capacity of only \$15,000,000 the ring has again leased the gas works for seventy-five years to the United Gas Improvement Company for \$25,000,000, to be paid in three years.

The Smith syndicate of New York capitalists has offered to loan the city of Philadelphia \$20,000,000 at 5 per cent to take up the gas lease, to advance \$5,000,000 more within five years, to reduce the price of gas to the consumer from \$1 to 80 cents, and to share the profits with the city, one-third for ten years and one-half for sixty-five years.

This the ring refuses and insists that its creatures in the councils shall override the expected veto of Mayor Weaver, defy the people, and remain true to the bosses and their hirelings.

The Ring Ten Years Old.

The disgraceful yet magnificent political machine torn asunder by Mayor Ashbridge, who, as mayor of Philadelphia, put a new system of political practice into operation and developed the Mayor Ashbridge was the czar referred to by Durham in his defense of the "rip-off" legislation recently approved by Governor Pennypacker.

It was Mayor Ashbridge, and not Durham, McNichol and Seger, who built up the great, cruel, corrupt and daring army of political freebooters now designated as "the organization." Well trained in the tricks of his trade, Mayor Ashbridge met the leaders on common ground. When they threatened he turned them out—witness David Martin.

When political blackmail was resorted to, as it was resorted to in an effort to coerce the executive, the mayor—Ashbridge—simply tightened the screws a bit and brought the recalcitrants to their knees. "Go along or die" was the slogan of the Ashbridge dynasty, and the history of the Ashbridge administration is the history of "the organization."

Quay's Treachery.

At this time it is intensely interesting to note the landmarks in the formation of "the organization," and to point out the evidence tending to prove that treachery, ingratitude, greed, envy, graft were the factors that first built up the amazing machine, and after ten years tore it asunder. It was the double dealing and treachery of the late Senator Quay and David Martin, that defeated Boies Penrose for the nomination for mayor in 1894 and marked the first step looking to the war on Martin, who at that time was the undisputed ruler of the city, acting under orders issued direct to him by William J. Latta, general agent of the Pennsylvania railroad.

In evident good faith the factors ruling the city under Martin, in the name of "the ward combine," met in secret session in a hall over a dancing school of Broad and Vine streets and agreed upon the nomination of Penrose. A few weeks later, at the instigation of Mr. Latta, a conference between Quay and Martin was held in this city. Quay's visit was held a close secret, and at the conference the deal to knife Penrose was made. In a word, the understanding between these two men was that, no matter what Senator Quay might write, do or say in public, Martin was to betray Penrose and to prevent his nomination for mayor at all hazards. The guiding mind back of this deal was William J. Latta.

Penrose Betrayed.

In the progress of the fierce fight that followed Senator Quay telegraphed Martin withdrawing all opposition to the nomination of Penrose, and ordering him nominated for mayor. Fearing that he had made these telegrams too strong, so that Martin might accept them in good faith, Senator Quay sent a messenger from Washington to Martin with verbal orders to disregard all telegrams and letters and to defeat Penrose at any cost.

All this time Senator Quay was dealing and trading with Penrose and seemingly using every lever at his command to further his interests. On the night of January 8, '95, the leaders of the ward combine met at Eleventh and Chestnut streets, in the parlors of the Union Republican Club, and repudiated Boies Penrose in the most brutal fashion and endorsed Charles F. Warwick for mayor. This action was instantly followed by the dissolution of the ward combine. It was Charles F. Warwick who signed and delivered the lease under which the United Gas Improvement Company now operates the gas works.

Tears in Durham's Eyes.

There were actual tears in the eyes of Israel W. Durham the next day, January 9, 1895, when he saw in Musical Fund Hall and witnessed the betrayal of Penrose in his own home ward—the Eighth. Every man in that convention was armed, and at a word from Durham a riot would have ensued and possibly murder been done. It is now an open secret that there was serious thought of kidnapping David Martin before he reached the convention hall and holding him prisoner until after the adjournment of the mayor's convention. On behalf of Martin he fully two-thirds of all the delegates, and the supporters of Penrose knew that they had been betrayed. They did not know, however, that it was William J. Latta who had sharpened the knife and Matthew Stanley Quay who had buried it deep in his back.

Congressman Bingham nominated Penrose for mayor. He might as well have talked to the seas and the storm, the lightning and the gale, as to that mob of